

# Haverhill Town Council

## Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

### FULL COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill



**HAVERHILL**  
TOWN COUNCIL

**Present:** Mayor Councillor D Smith  
Councillor A Brown  
Councillor J Burns  
Councillor B Davidson  
Councillor P Firman  
Councillor P Hanlon  
Councillor A Luccarini  
Councillor M Marks  
Councillor M Martin  
Councillor J Mason  
Councillor L Smith

**Apologies:** Councillor R André  
Councillor Q Cox  
Councillor J Crooks  
Councillor L Miller-Jones  
Councillor D Page

**In Attendance:** Colin Poole, Town Clerk  
Jane Lomas, Council Administrator  
County Councillor David Roach

4 members of the public were present.

### Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting was being recorded.

### MINUTES

<b>C23</b> <b>/101</b>	<b><u>Apologise for Absence</u></b> The above apologies were noted.	
		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>C23</b> <b>/102</b>	<b><u>Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation</u></b> None.	
<b>C23</b> <b>/103</b>	<b><u>Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held Monday, 26 June 2023</u></b> It was proposed by Councillor L Smith, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon that the minutes of the meeting held 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 be agreed as a true record. <b>RESOLVED</b>	

<p><b>C23 /104</b></p>	<p><b><u>To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda</u></b>  C23/082b) The Clerk will invite Stagecoach to an Autumn meeting of the Full Council.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>C23 /105</b></p>	<p><b><u>Reports from District/County Councillors on issues to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM</u></b></p> <p><b>a)</b> The Mayor advised that he attended the Police and Crime Panel meeting last Friday. A new panel is in place and they would like to recruit an Independent member to the panel.</p> <p><b>b) County Councillors – see appendix 1.</b>  <b>Councillor J Mason:</b> see report attached (Appendix 1)  Cllr A Brown appreciated the work being carried out around SEND.  Cllr J Mason noted that this is a national issue and he welcomes any comments to aid in addressing the issue of poor provision.</p> <p>Cllr J Mason provided two updates to his report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obscured New Sign (Meadows Long Stay Car Park) – Highways has confirmed that the sign is located in the correct place. They will arrange for trimming of the willow tree obscuring it.</li> <li>• Cllr J Mason will be raising concerns with Cabinet as West Suffolk Council cancelled the July meeting; the next one scheduled for September. New direction regarding policy is yet to be received from the new Council.</li> </ul> <p>Persimmon Estate &amp; Relief Road – Cllr J Burns reported that the road is the width agreed with Planning when it was designed in 2015: 8.9m wide excluding the pavement. Cllr J Mason said that Highways has confirmed this.</p> <p>Bus Stop, Greenfields Way – The Clerk reported that West Suffolk Council’s Legal Team has responded as follows: SCC has stated they are unable to accept an open-ended cost clause in a draft agreement between County Council and the Medical Properties Limited. SCC has agreed to provide WSC with an update as soon as they are in a position to do so. The Clerk posed the question on whether HTC might consider taking on the liability for costs associated with taking away the bus stop, in order that it be installed in the first place. Cllr J Mason said that he would like to have a discussion with the portfolio holders in order to resolve this issue.</p> <p><b>County Councillor D Roach</b> advised he circulates roadwork alerts to clerks. Bumpstead road will be closed for replacement of 9m water main and repair the gas main. He has been appointed to the Education Scrutiny Committee at Suffolk County Council.</p> <p>Councillor M Marks asked Councillor Roach about enquiries she gets regarding SEND services. He advised that parents should contact their local county councillors to take up such matters.</p>	

	<p>Councillor Roach added that Haverhill In Bloom have an issue with West Suffolk Council in terms of getting hanging baskets installed, leaving several thousand pounds' worth of flowers sat in their depot.</p> <p><b>c) Councillor L Smith</b> reported that she has been undertaken training as a new district councillor.</p> <p>Residents in Eastern Avenue have expressed concern about asbestos where hedging has been removed, leaving the fence exposed. The Council has confirmed that it is asbestos mixed with cement, it is stable, and does not require any further action.</p> <p>Residents in the Clements Estate had reported not having their bins collected. This has been resolved.</p> <p><b>Councillor P Firman</b> reported that the grass cutting issue at Minster Road has been resolved, following establishing ownership of the land. He has also been clearing the overgrown vegetation around the Welcome to Haverhill signs, which had become obscured and can now easily be seen.</p> <p><b>Councillor J Burns:</b> see report attached (Appendix 2).</p> <p><b>Councillor M Marks:</b> see report attached (Appendix 2). Cllr M Marks reported that she attended the recent West Suffolk Council's Parish Forum Meeting and many people who attended felt it was not best use of their time.</p> <p>Councillor Marks attended a recent visit to the recycling and energy from waste plants at Great Blakenham and found it very useful.</p> <p><b>d)</b> A member of the public raised concern and voiced his disappointment about Barclays Bank closing in Haverhill. He felt this was a vital service to the community and was closed without public consultation.</p>	
<p><b>C23</b> <b>/106</b></p>	<p><b><u>Get Suffolk Reading</u></b></p> <p>Ms Amanda Williams introduced herself as the new project manager. She has a background in education. Get Suffolk Reading is place-based with hubs in Haverhill, Stowmarket and Lowestoft. Get Suffolk Reading promotes reading for pleasure and literacy skills.</p> <p>The National Literacy Trust has a three-strand approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspirations and employability</li> <li>• Wellbeing</li> <li>• Home learning environment</li> </ul> <p>Every project will contain at least one of these strands.</p> <p>Ms Williams is currently embedding herself within the community and meeting with schools and other groups. A key message being delivered is that reading</p>	

	<p>improves mood. An initiative Take 10 in 10 is being held on 10<sup>th</sup> October during Mental Health Awareness Week – promoting ten minutes of reading a day.</p> <p>Cllr M Marks asked what the Town Council can do to help. Ms Williams said that she is planning on attending Town Council events where she can talk with the residents to find out what they would like to see from the project.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Amanda for attending and introducing herself.</p>	
<b>C23 /107</b>	<p><b><u>Grant Applications over £2,000</u></b></p> <p>a) Haverhill Community Sports Association: To consider a grant request for £5,000 towards new facilities at the New Croft. Mr Peter Betts outlined the project and answered questions from Councillors.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor M Marks, seconded by Councillor J Mason that the grant be approved.</p> <p>An amendment was proposed by Councillor A Brown, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini that the grant awarded be £3,000, citing concerns that the council exceeded the grant-giving budget last year and had to draw on reserves, and had determined to give smaller grants in order to benefit as many organisations as possible. Councillor J Mason offered to make up the shortfall if this amendment was agreed, as he wanted to see the project go ahead, but would prefer HTC to give the full requested amount. The amendment to offer a £3,000 grant was voted on.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>The amended proposal, as amended, to grant £3,000 to the Haverhill Community Sports Association was voted on.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>b) Reach Haverhill: To consider a grant application for £10,000 towards the running costs of local food distribution hubs.</p> <p>Having heard Councillors’ concerns regarding awarding large sums early in the year, Henry Wilson, CEO, Reach, revised the grant application to £5,000. It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini that a grant of £5,000 be awarded to Reach Haverhill towards the running costs of food distribution hubs.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>Councillors acknowledged the work undertaken by Haverhill Sports Association, and Reach Haverhill, and advised them to submit further grant requests if the need arises.</p>	
<b>C23 /108</b>	<p><b><u>Mayor’s Report</u></b></p> <p>Mayor’s report – see appendix 3.</p>	
<b>C23 /109</b>	<p><b><u>ONE Haverhill Partnership</u></b></p> <p>Cllr J Mason reported that he attended the Board meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023. He was unsure what the rules were for members of the public being permitted to speak. The Clerk advised that public speaking is allowed, but was omitted in error from the agenda.</p>	

	Cllr M Marks advised that she will be stepping down from the Science Festival Task Group but she will help with the event if required. Cllr M Marks distributed leaflets promoting an initiative called Community Catalysts. This has been set up to offer personal support for people in their homes from local people. Through this, SCC will support groups of up to six people, or individuals who require help.	
<b>C23 /110</b>	<b><u>Adoption of Committee Reports</u></b> a) <u>Planning Working Party</u> : It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor L Smith that the minutes of the meeting 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 be agreed as a true record. <b>RESOLVED</b> b) <u>Leisure &amp; Community Committee</u> : It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor M Martin that the minutes of the meeting held 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2023 be agreed as a true record. <b>RESOLVED</b>	
<b>C23 /111</b>	<b><u>Financial Matters</u></b> <u>Authorisation of payments</u> : It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini, seconded by Councillor B Davidson, that the listed payments totalling £81,070.37 be authorised. <b>RESOLVED</b>	
<b>C23 /112</b>	<b><u>Actions taken under delegated powers</u></b> The Clerk agreed a 12-month contract allowing Barclays Bank to provide financial services from Haverhill Arts Centre, commencing 11 <sup>th</sup> September. This will be an advice-only service. There will not be a banking counter service and no money will be held on the premises. That is all provided at the local Post Office. <b>NOTED</b>	
<b>C23 /113</b>	<b><u>To receive urgent correspondence</u></b> None.	
<b>C23 /114</b>	<b><u>Date of next Meeting:</u></b> Monday, 25 September 2023.	
<b>C23 /115</b>	<b><u>Closure</u></b> The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.14pm.	

Signed .....

**Chairman**

Date.....

**APPENDIX 1 – County Councillors’ reports**  
**APPENDIX 2 – District Councillors’ reports**  
**APPENDIX 3 – Other Reports From Members**  
**APPENDIX 4 – Mayor’s Report**

## **APPENDIX 1 – County Councillors’ reports West Suffolk District Councillor J Mason**

This month I have added an addendum focussing on SEND. It is my intention each report, depending on what information is available, to choose a different topic to focus on. I would like to remind members that I am one of 3 County Councillors and that you can also contact Councillors Roach & Sowa if there are any specific questions and concerns not covered in this report.

Local issues I am engaged with, and Topics covered in this report.

1. [Haverhill’s New Recycling Centre](#)
2. [Highways Update](#)
3. [Highways Locality Funding](#)
4. [£10 million new funding to fix residential roads.](#)
5. [Stagecoach Buses](#)
6. [Persimmon Estate & Relief Road](#)
7. [S106 – Improvement to Ann Suckling Road and Wratting Road](#)
8. [No Mow May](#)
9. [Anaerobic Biodigester](#)
10. [Parish & Town Council Meeting @ West Suffolk](#)

.....

11. [General Council News since last report](#)

Inc: Household Support Fund  
Motions Passed  
Addendum: Focus on SEND

### **1. Haverhill’s New Recycling Centre**

No update this month, though Cllrs Roach and Sowa are looking to join with me on a visit to the site soon to monitor and I will report back to the Town Council on progress.

A recent fire on site has led to a slight delay in the construction programme while the damage is assessed and to give time for any remediation before recommencing the construction.

“When a fire starts in piles of waste, it is usually caused by a discarded battery that has managed to spark. This can happen if there is friction, for example when a waste pile is being moved or crushed. Lithium batteries are a particular problem, but standard household batteries are also culprits as well as vapes and small electricals.

Please don’t put any waste electrical items or batteries in any of your bins at home.

Recycle them at recycling centres or most large stores where they are sold, to ensure they are managed appropriately and recycled. Also be aware of hidden electricals – items that don’t look like they have a battery such as Christmas jumpers, light toys or vapes.” (SCC)

## 2. Highways Update

I continue to have on-going discussion with highways regarding road surface damage issues. Many thanks to members and residents who continue to use the Suffolk Highways reporting tool.

<https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

- o **Queen Street/Highstreet Road defect**

Anglian Water have rejected fixing this defect citing that it is an issue for Suffolk Highways to resolve. In discussions with my highway's locality officer, I have asked if the Highways Assessment Officer can order a reactive repair (to have the tarmac patch re-done around the covers)

There will also be a separate request for the proper paving stones to be replaced – this will have to be prioritised by the Asset Team. There are a few similar areas in Haverhill where paving stones/brick weave have received a temporary repair with tarmac, and it is hoped that these can be included in the works programme.

- o **Missing signs, town centre, Ehringshausen Way Delivery Drop off Zone and any other TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) issues**

Many thanks for the work Cllr Burns has done on this. I know this is something that he has been working on for a long time and we are getting closer to finding a solution. His knowledge on the TRO's pre & post COVID has been greatly helpful. This week I am reviewing the new recommendations/asks put forward by Town Councillors with Cllrs Roach & Sowa. Frustratingly, this work will not be carried out until October at the earliest as Kier are not taking on any new work. I will look to inform members probably by email the outcome of the review by the Haverhill County Councillors, rather than wait until September's Full Council Meeting.

- o **Bus Stop, Greenfields Way.**

No further news at the moment, and I refer members back to my report in May. Currently West Suffolk Council seem to be holding this up and I intend to speak with officers to see if this project can be finally progressed.

- o **Growth Cut back on Ehringshausen Way**

In January or February this year, the then Cllr, Allan Stinchcombe requested that the trees and bushes on Ehringshausen Way near the Sturmer Arches to be cut back as they were a hazard to pedestrians and cyclist.

This work has now been done. The delay caused by having to send 3 reminders to the property owner. Frustrating how long it takes to get issues like this resolved, but Highways have their procedures which also protect the Council against legal action from private property owners.

- o **Obscured New Sign**

A new sign for Meadows Long Stay Car Park has been erected, much to the amusement of people on Social media. I will be conveying the need for a cutback of the tree so that the sign can be properly viewed.

### 3. Highways Locality Funding

I have secured additional funding to install dropped kerbs on Clements Drive. I was about £2000 short and Cllr David Roach has agreed to make up the difference to get the job over the line.

There are a number of other sites around Haverhill we are looking at to improve access for people with mobility difficulties which we hope to address in the coming months.

Please note Highways locality funding is not for potholes but for initiatives that improve our highways whether for safety or accessibility.

### 4. £10 million new funding to fix residential roads.

As reported previously, local road surfaces in villages and residential areas in Suffolk will be targeted as part of a new £10 million programme.

I am keen that Haverhill gets its fair share of resurfacing. County Councillors are being asked to prioritise which areas should be looked at. It is unlikely that all areas can be re-dressed, but we are looking to get the maximum amount of work done as possible.

Cllrs Roach, Sowa and myself have identified the Parkway, Clements and Chalkstone estates as priority areas, as priority areas.

### 5. Stagecoach buses

Stagecoach have now published their revised timetable that will take effect from the 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

I am grateful to Stagecoach for being willing to work with me and to listen to residents concerns. Whilst the new timetable isn't universally popular it does mark a significant improvement.

The service will now only be the 13

- No service before 06:00
- Quarter hourly service between 06:00 & 07:00
- Half Hourly service between 07:00 & 09:00
- Hourly Service between 09:00 & 14:00
- Half Hourly service on the hour between 14:00 & 17:30
- No Service on Sundays

The 131 & 131A will now again stop near the junction of Wratting Road and Ann Suckling I look forward to the Town Council receiving a presentation from Stagecoach in the coming months.

**6. Persimmon Estate & Relief Road** ○ Work continues/ I have raised concerns about the road width of the Relief Road. Highways will be confirming its specification. It is clearly not going to be the same width as the Western Relief Road and it has been communicated to me that it is likely going to be a 40mph limited road. I have reservations about how articulated lorries will pass each other on this road as it does seem particularly narrow. I await confirmation of its specification.



- **Persimmon Community Room/Hall**

No further news. I refer councillors to my report in May

## **7. S106 – Improvement to Ann Suckling Road and Wratting Road**

No further news other than meetings and discussions with West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. There is a desire to deliver on the S106 and designs are being created and work is being done to try and address the shortfall in funding.

### **8. No-Mow May**

Awaiting an opportunity to debate this at County & West Suffolk:

**“Informal verges managed for wildlife:** In 2021 Suffolk Highways sought to increase the length of verges managed for wildlife by at least 25%. Looking at areas adjacent to existing RNRs and areas suggested by parish councils we identified an additional 16km of verge which appeared to be safe to leave un-cut in spring. All of the informal verges managed for wildlife are cut in September. 16km equates to a 42% increase from the original 38km of RNR so we exceeded the target by some margin.” (SCC)

### **9. Acorn Anaerobic Biodigester.**

Suffolk County Council have the application but are awaiting further information before validation. It is expected in the next couple of weeks.

### **10. Parish & Town Council Meeting @ West Suffolk on 11.07.23**

Very few key takeaways from what was in my opinion a very poorly organised event.

- The main takeaway is that the Community Chest application window is now open and I urge members to sign post to local organisations who think they might qualify.  
<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-grants.cfm>
- The leader Cllr Cliff Waterman announced 4 priorities for the new council: Growth, Housing, Families & Communities & Sustainability – so far so bland – I think every party would align to those priorities. But still no further details as to what this means policy wise. July’s meeting has been cancelled and we won’t find out more until the earliest September nearly 5 months from the new Administration taking office. I will be attending Cabinet this Tuesday evening to hopefully get more meat on the bones so to speak.

### **11. General SCC News**

#### **Household Support Fund**

The Council has received a fourth round of the Household Support Fund (HSF) grant of £10,212,060.00 from the Department for Work & Pensions. This covers 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 and will be allocated in the following areas:

- **Free School Meals** vouchers will continue over the course of 12-months, covering May half-term 2023 to Easter 2024. The total cost of FSM vouchers over the 12-months would be £3,748,047.50.
- **District and Borough Housing Teams:** An initial allocation of £500,000 will be made available to district and borough council partners to support with housing costs, with a further £250,000 allocated for the autumn/winter period as required.
- **Local Welfare Assistance Scheme:** Financial support through the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) will also continue, with successful applicants receiving a payment of £300. Applicants will be able to apply for financial support twice during the 12-month period and will need to confirm their eligibility each time, allowing for changes in circumstances to be assessed.
- **Other Support and Expenditure** £450,000 will be made available for the supply of food. This will be achieved by utilising established supply chains and the existing VCFSE network.

I would again urge all members to signpost to your contacts & communities information about the cost-of-living support that is available:

Suffolk County Council:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/cost-of-living-support>

of course, West Suffolk Council has information to:

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/cost-of-living/>

## Motions to Council

**Motion 1 – Proposed by Councillor Matthew Hicks and seconded by Councillor Richard Smith. PASSED** Figures from the Society for Motor Manufacturers and Traders show that in 2022 the number of vehicles on UK roads reached an all-time high of 40.72 million, including a record 1.1 million electric cars. Furthermore, between 2011 and 2021 the number of households with two or more cars or vans increased by 17%. This Council recognises that many of our residents are concerned by new residential developments in Suffolk being consented and built with insufficient car parking provision and we can all cite bad examples of this from the recent past.

It is the view of the Council that its minimum parking standards, set out in the 2019 Suffolk Parking Guidance, are not consistently upheld and too often the minimum parking requirements are relaxed in inappropriate locations due to the often spurious arguments of developers.

The Council notes that the Suffolk Parking Guidance, last updated in 2019, is currently being reviewed with a rightful focus on, amongst other things, EV charging provision and secure cycle storage. This document also focuses on the equally important issue of design and placement to ensure that high quality, useable spaces are incorporated within developments.

Furthermore, the Council recognises that, as a rural county, many Suffolk residents rely on car travel and that the viability of our town centres and businesses relies on accessibility by car in

addition to other sustainable means. In the context of record numbers of vehicles on UK roads, the rural nature of our County and local concern over inadequate parking provision in many new developments the council resolves to:

- i. Write to the Heads of Planning and relevant Cabinet members at Suffolk's District and Borough Councils, underlining the importance of these minimum parking standards and requesting that these are not relaxed inappropriately.
- ii. Instruct County Council officers that when responding as local highways authority to local planning applications, we should rigorously uphold the minimum parking standards and object to any scheme where these standards are inappropriately reduced.
- iii. Continue with its review of the Suffolk Parking Guidance and enhance the ask of developers to ensure the best possible parking provision for all vehicles, including bicycles, alongside access to appropriate EV charging infrastructure.'

**Motion 2 – Proposed by Councillor Robert Lindsay and seconded by Councillor Andrew Stringer. NOT PASSED**

1. Suffolk's road network includes highways ranging from high quality carriageways to twisting narrow roads where the "national" speed limit of 60mph applies yet where, for long stretches, the average vehicle speed is significantly less than the national speed limit.

2. This council believes that, where this is the case, a lower speed limit other than 60mph would encourage many drivers to slow to a more appropriate, safer speed, thereby reducing accidents and making roads safer for all users of such roads.

The councils' current criteria for changing speed limits have not been reviewed since 2014.

3. The council will therefore agree to set up a cross party working group to review the criteria for changing speed limits bearing in mind the principle in item 2 and report back with a reviewed set of criteria for cabinet approval within six months.

**Motion 3 – Proposed by Councillor Sandy Martin and seconded by Councillor Sarah Adams NOT PASSED**

"The greatest assets this County Council has, enabling it to fulfil its aims, are the frontline staff who develop and deliver our services across Suffolk.

We are proud of the fact that Suffolk County Council pays all of its staff above the Real Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation.

However, there are some frontline staff employed by companies contracted to deliver services for this Council who do not pay all of their employees at or above the Real Living Wage. There are also staff working for contractors who do not receive pension entitlements that meet the Living Pension criteria.

We note that there are over 800 public sector bodies already accredited to the Living Wage Foundation, including numerous councils such as Lancashire County Council and Cornwall Council.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- 1) Seek accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation in order to publicly celebrate our determination to pay our staff at or above the Real Living Wage
- 2) Develop a plan to move towards contracts that specify the Real Living Wage for all of the contractors' employees
- 3) Investigate the impact of becoming a Living Pensions Employer, with a view to accreditation in the future."

---

## **Addendum: Focus on SEND & Inclusion**

### **SEND and Inclusion**

The Council's SEND Integrated Strategy 2021-23 continues to inform and drive our commitment to make improvements in the SEND partnership in Suffolk. The strategy has 4 priorities.

1. Communication
2. The Child/Young Person's Journey
3. Commissioning and Services
4. Moving into Adulthood/ Preparing for Adulthood

#### **Priority One: Communication**

1. The project to move and improve the Local Offer website continues to progress, with content review sessions with parent carers and other stakeholders. The new website will launch by the end of 2023 and will provide a much easier experience for families to find information and advice.
2. The new Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Portal launched in April of this year, giving families a new, secure method of communicating directly with their named Family Service officer. The system provides a direct online portal where parents can request an EHC needs assessment and track the progress of the request and communicate with the Family Services Team. This will help resolve some of the communication issues experienced by families. In addition, new staff have been recruited specifically to answer telephone calls and to respond to queries about new Education, Health and Care needs assessments and Annual Reviews.
3. The Inclusion Support Line for staff in schools and settings has received nearly 500 calls since September 2022 and is providing good early signposting and support for school staff. The Inclusion Support Line advisors also now answer webchat queries from schools and settings on some of the school-facing webpages.
4. Inclusion Services continue to communicate with families, schools, and other stakeholders through a variety of methods including newsletters, social media, the school-facing roadshows, and family-facing Time to Listen sessions. The commitment to hear the lived experience of families and use this to inform and direct the improvement work continues.

#### **Priority Two: The Child/Young Person's Journey**

5. Support for families and officers to use the new EHC Portal has been provided. Whilst it takes time to 'bed in' new systems, early feedback has been encouraging and indicates the improvements this new method of communicating will bring. The next phase of this project will see Annual Reviews being processed through the portal and greater access for professionals and practitioners. This will lead to increased efficiency in joint working, which will in turn benefit families and improve their experience of services.
6. Suffolk continues to experience increased demand for Educational, Health and Care needs assessments (EHCNAs) and Education Health Care plans (EHCPs). The service's ability to complete these within the statutory timescales is currently restricted by a shortage of Educational Psychologists (EPs), without whose advice an assessment cannot be concluded. This is both a local and national issue. The service continues to address this through a variety of methods

including a recruitment campaign, with 6 new EPs joining in September 2023, and the use of Locum and Assistant EPs.

7. The work to develop a document setting out what is ordinarily available in a school, so families and schools easily understand what provision is expected in all Suffolk mainstream schools is progressing well. We are currently consulting with schools and Suffolk Parent Carer Forum, with the finished Suffolk Mainstream Inclusion Framework resource being planned for launch in early 2024.

8. Our Special Education Services (SES) are moving to a locality model from 2024, where all schools will have a linked SES Officer who will visit termly to talk through their particular cohort and needs and advise / arrange support accordingly. This will enable the team to promote consistency of inclusive practice across the county and facilitate quicker access to the right support where needed. This will complement the work being done by the Whole School Inclusion Team and the new Education Access Team, who started in September 2022. The remit of the Education Access Team is to support children and young people who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion. The roll out of Valuing SEND (VSEND) continues. Over 300 schools have now been trained in this approach to identify children's needs and consider the school's readiness to meet them.

9. A recent internal audit of the quality of EHCPs found an overall improvement in the quality of new plans being issued, with the majority of children making progress against their outcomes in all the areas of need (cognition and learning, sensory and physical, communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health). Areas for improvement were identified and included the percentage of children who have had an Annual Review held within the last 12 months and the quality of Moving into Adulthood plans for children in school years 9 and above. Both areas have action being taken to address them.

### **Priority Three: Commissioning and Services**

10. The SEND Capital Programme continues to be on track to deliver 1250 new specialist places between 2022 and 2025. Following the commissioning for phase 2 in late 2022, two new units for children with cognition and learning needs have been agreed in Bury and East Bergholt (to open September 2024), whilst feasibility work is ongoing with interested parties in the North of the county. Phase 3 will see eight new units for students with social, emotional, and mental health needs (all areas), and two for those with communication and interaction needs (West and North); specifications for these are currently being worked on, information sessions are being held and schools have been invited to express their interest. It is expected phase 3 will see the 8 new units scheduled to open in September 2024 for existing sites or September 2025 for any new builds.

11. Following a bid to the Department for Education, Suffolk have secured funding for a new Special Free School to be based in East Suffolk to meet the needs of children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) (precise location has not yet been confirmed). This is one of only 33 such projects approved across the whole of England announced on 2 March 2023.

12. As part of the SEND Sufficiency partnership work, a working group has been set up to seek solutions around the continuing shortage of Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists. This is a nationwide problem; Suffolk are committed to doing everything possible to resolve this at a county level with an addition

committed investment of £800k from the high needs block of the designated schools grant (DSG) for therapies in 2023/24. The Council is working with partners to develop specific Recruitment and Retention policies as well as extending the work with locum, assistant and independent professionals in the short term in each area.

#### **Priority Four: Moving into Adulthood**

13. Suffolk's revised transition guide (supporting young people as they move on from their schools' placements at age 16) will be published in June 2023. The refresh is being produced with collaboration from parent/carers, colleagues from Education, Health and Social Care and other stakeholders. The Preparing for Adulthood section of the Local Offer website will also be refreshed in line with this as part of the wider Local Offer website re-platforming project. The changes have been made to improve the guide in response to feedback from young people and their families.

14. Suffolk continues to collaborate with Post 16 providers to develop supported internships for young people aged 16-24 with SEND who have an EHC plan as part of the national Internship Works programme. These internships comprise a substantial work placement alongside study, facilitated by the support of an expert job coach. Initially the hope is to offer around 20 supported internships.

#### **Other Updates:**

**Local Area Review by Ofsted and CQC** - Preparation continues across the SEND partnership (the local area) for the Ofsted Inspection, supported by the newly appointed SEND Inspection Officer.

**Capacity and Recruitment** - The capacity gap with Family Services has significantly reduced from 35% in August 2022 to 5% in May 2023. The service is currently employing 13.4 full time equivalent temporary workers across management roles, coordinators, and business support to address the volume of outstanding statutory work and provide capacity whilst new staff are inducted and trained. These temporary roles do not currently form part of the established structure for SEND Services. Those posts that are still vacant are receiving applicants of a good calibre. Further work is underway to review the demand on statutory services and consider what is required to create a resilient sufficient structure.

**Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV)** - As previously reported, Suffolk has been awarded a grant of £1m for the Council's proposed project to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND as part of the Government's Delivering Better Value project. It will be implemented in Autumn 2023 and run for 2 years. It will work with schools to support them to identify and implement evidence-based interventions targeted at improving the core basic skills of children and improve their confidence to engage with the wider curriculum, preventing needs escalating.

While very welcome, and of direct practical help to schools and children, the grant will only make a relatively modest contribution to reducing the significant growth in High Needs Funding spend. The Capital Programme, which is creating 1250 new specialist places between 2022 and 2025, is a more substantial mitigation. This still leaves a significant and escalating High Needs Funding deficit of £30.641m as of 31 March 2023.

## **APPENDIX 2 – District Councillors’ reports**

### **Councillor Margaret Marks**

On Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July Councillors were given the opportunity to visit the Waste Disposal Hub at Great Blakenham. I went largely out of a sense of duty but found it an incredibly enlightening and enjoyable visit. The work that has been done to ensure minimum waste goes into landfill and the creative use of general **waste was**

From the comments on Facebook, it is clear that the public perception of waste management is considerably flawed, and so Joe Mason and I have offered, via Keep Haverhill Tidy, to organise a trip to the facility. The more of our residents who have the opportunity to witness how waste is disposed of may encourage better use of our recycling bins.

The management on site are keen to encourage visits and perhaps the Town Council may consider promoting this via their social media outlets.

There was one disturbing fact highlighted and that is the huge risk of fire from Lithium Batteries – contained in Vapes and toothbrushes, for example. These are ending up in the Grey general rubbish and are causing fires. They are asking that these are taken to the retailers where such items are sold as they are required to have disposal bins to accommodate these.

At present, the operator has a way to contain a minor fire but any substantial fire would cause the facility to shut and the consequential backlog (arriving hourly) would need to go into landfill – both of these issues they seek to avoid but they are often hidden in the rubbish.

Blue bins – quite a lot of hand sorting still has to take place as people are putting soft plastic and bin bags in the recycling. The machinery cannot cope with this and it has to be removed prior to main sorting. The wrong items, particularly wet or soiled, in the blue bin can easily result in the entire lorry load being transferred to the incinerator.

There is currently no plan to collect glass at the road side and they explained that if this was put in the blue bin, the broken glass would contaminate the contents, effectively meaning it could not be recycled. The bottle banks are an effective way to recycle and they informed that these are delivered to a recycling centre next to a bottling plant.

Whilst I urge all Councillors to visit, there is one caveat, the walkways are high and are see through – if you suffer any form of vertigo, this is a challenge.

## **Appendix 3 Other Reports from Members**

### **Councillor John Burns**

- **Great Wilsey Park:** Work continues albeit at a much-reduced rate. The temporary access road in Chalkstone Way, which was closed off, will be reopened shortly to avoid construction traffic passing by the newly completed and occupied properties in Donovan Way.
- **Police Matters:** Crime stats for May 2023 were distributed on 13<sup>th</sup> July. There has been no new edition of ‘Constables County’.

- **SCC Highways:** I continue to work on proposed TRO changes to be presented to SCC soon. Just waiting for comments from WSC CPE officers for any items they need to be resolved not already identified.
- **Combined Authority:** No further useful updates.
- **Greater Cambridge Partnership:** Work progresses on the Dean Road crossroad closure and installation of new roundabout at Bartlow Crossroads.
- **Parking:** There has of course been no progress on this with the town centre and other areas continuing to suffer from lack of enforcement. I now have a drafted a FOI request to obtain the latest annual stats soon for comparison purposes similar to that obtained last year.
- **Environment:** Several of us undertook a walkaround of Chalkstone on 6<sup>th</sup> July. Quite a few items were identified and an update on the December walkabout was received. A further walkaround of the Birds estate will be scheduled later in the year.
- **Markets:** No progress with WSC over the market review which has now passed it's one year anniversary since it was approved. I am getting together a document of all the changes that were agreed to in our meetings, which I chaired, rather than just the policy changes proposed to Cabinet. I knew this would happen and at the last meeting we held I requested that the working group was kept going to monitor progress, but WSC officers insisted it stopped and "left them to get on with it", which has clearly not happened. Primarily because they have not even solved the #1 item on the list to decide which department at WSC runs the Markets.
- **Sturmer Arches:** Awaiting information from the National Archives as to the amount it will cost to copy the relevant papers from the British Rail estate sale archives. I had to pay a small amount for someone to do the work on basis it will be cheaper than my spending 2-3 days going through archives in Kew.
- **Atterton & Ellis site:** Still no news.
- **Fox PH (Wratting Road):** The site has been purchased by a new developer who has now approached WSC with a view to submitting another planning application. It is of course hoped that a similar facility as was approved will be proposed with perhaps the car park behind the building rather than appearing as the gateway.
- **Vixen PH (Millfields Way):** This is up again for auction on 2<sup>nd</sup> August with a guide price of £650,000. Considering this is double what the previous owner bought it at is in cloud cuckoo land especially if any bidder reads the legal pack and understands it does not have planning permission which the website now makes perfectly clear.
- **McDonald's Bumpstead Road.** As is well known this was approved. Having watched the YouTube video, the committee discussion was very bad with members seemingly only concerned over the litter that may be generated on site whereas we know McDonald's have a reputation of ensuring their sites are managed. Not concerned about the existing problem in Phoenix Road, which comes under Braintree, caused by the numerous HGVs that parked there but which Haverhill residents pay to have cleaned by WSC. The officer made some strange claims about new footpaths and crossings proposed for Bumpstead Road which is not the case. Objections from SCC and WSC were totally ignored with their officer claiming they were of no consequence especially over traffic assessments. I have to say discussions at WSC Development Control meetings are a world away to what I saw in Braintree.
- **Strasbourg Square:** The work to renovate the Square (after 2 years of my proposing and chasing) is now finally complete and looks a lot better. I managed to convince WSC to install 2 reconditioned benches which have already been used by people walking between the town and the Chalkstone estate. Just hope that the planting is now maintained and that nobody decides to destroy anything.





- **Market Square:** The dips around the edge have not been fixed by SCC as was requested to them by WSC. The internal dips appear to be now OK but have not managed to check when it has rained.
- **Other work:**
  - Helped out at the annual Samuel Ward prom facilitating filming, movement of barriers/cones and stewarding outside the HAC. A review has since been undertaken with a view to making changes for next year to avoid any traffic conflicts it may cause elsewhere.
  - Facilitated with HTC staff a special opening of the splash pad for the Kedington Brownies & Guides. The pad itself will be closed on 18<sup>th</sup> July for its mid-season cleaning.
  - Following the closure of the bar for the Mutiny exhibition, had to quickly redesign and implement a “bar” system in the Coffee Bar ready for several shows the next day. It is hoped the work needed in the bar to facilitate the new till systems will be completed in next few weeks ready for its reopening. The Coffee Bar system is due to be upgraded (same as Zone) to facilitate cash and card payments where customers want to split the payments.
  - Following failure of the HAC network firewall hardware had to quickly react at a weekend to reinstate phone and internet traffic to the building which now working OK. The hardware is currently being reassessed by the manufacturer. Installed a replacement wireless access point, which was intermittently disconnecting, outside the Coffee Bar and reconfigured all units to give central management control to HTC staff. Work will be undertaken soon to check out and fix any internet related problems in the Media Hub for the upcoming use by Barclays.
  - Currently investigating the installation of FTTP to the HAC, Zone and Kiosk. The Clements Community Centre cannot yet take advantage of this. It is hoped this will bring in some substantial savings to our phone bills by the replacement of analogue circuits with digital.
  - At the request of WSC tested the Community Chest grant application system and made lots of change requests before it went live last week.
  - Continue to regularly approve HTC/HCT invoice payments.
  - Attended various HTC meetings both physically and online.
  - Picked up both VAS from Dereham after repair. One had to have its radar replaced and both had the polycarbonate screen replaced after vandalism with paint. They will be going out soon starting with Bumpstead Road and then other locations before moving onto new locations that have been identified by the police and others.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Mayor's Report**

After an initial burst of activity since my last report, actual mayoral engagements this month have been few and far between, although the many council meetings I have attended has meant that this has not been a quiet month by any stretch of the imagination.

On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June I attended the ONE Haverhill Partnership Board Meeting, which took place at its new home, the EpiCentre. Unfortunately, the planned presentation on Suffolk Mental Health Funding wasn't given as the presenter's car developed a mechanical problem and she didn't make the meeting.

I had intended to go to the Suffolk Pride event in Ipswich with my consort the following evening, but I had to cancel due to personal reasons.

Twenty-four hours later we were delighted be invited guests at The Haverhill Singers Summer Concert at Haverhill Methodist Church. Another wonderful performance by this talented group of people, under the baton for the first time of their new Musical Director.

Last week I was at West Suffolk House for the Town and Parish Forum and Conference. Although returning members may not have taken a great deal from the evening, the event was primarily aimed at parishes and new members and there was a great deal of information provided on the evening for them to digest. The table I was on had a good discussion about the differences in the requirements and services provided by the various councils, and what help they would like from WSC.

Last Wednesday, along with a number of other town councillors, I went to a pop-up recovery café at the Limes in Camps Road to see and hear the work being done by Sanctuary for those recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. We are hoping to have a meeting with them to see how we can assist them.

Finally, yesterday we went to the Chair of West Suffolk Council's Civic Service at St Mary's church in the village of Kentford. It was a bit of a squeeze, and I don't think the church has seen such an attendance in many years!

Engagements coming up in next few weeks include the official opening of the Mutiny in Colour exhibition at the Arts Centre, a photo shoot for our Christmas panto(!), and various community events. I am looking forward a relaxing break at the end of the month, the first chance to get away in a very long time.